AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A soft Cr-containing steel having a composition, on a % by mass basis, comprising:

C: from about 0.001% to about 0.020%;

Si: more than about 0.10% and less than about 0.50%;

Mn: less than about 2.00%;

P: less than about 0.060%;

S: less than about 0.008%;

Cr: from about 12.0% or more to about 16.0%;

Ni: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%;

N: less than about 0.020%;

Nb: from about ~~10 x (C + N) to about~~ 0.30% to less than 1.00%;

Mo: more than about 0.80% and less than about 3.00%; and

Fe and incidental impurities,

wherein the contents of alloying elements, silicon and molybdenum, represented by Si and Mo, respectively, on a % by mass basis, satisfy the following formula (1):

$$Si \leq 1.2 - 0.4Mo. \qquad (1)$$

2. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, wherein the content of Mo is more than about 1.50% and less than about 3.00% by mass in the composition.

3. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

4. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 2, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

5. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

6. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 2, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

7. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 3, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

8. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

9. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 2, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

10. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 3, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

11. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 4, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

12. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

13. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 2, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

14. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 3, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

15. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 4, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

16. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 5, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

17. (original) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, wherein regarding the state of Mo in the steel, a ratio of (112) diffraction intensity of the Laves phase, $(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)$, to (111) diffraction intensity of Nb carbonitride, Nb(C,N), A value = $I\{(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)\}_{(112)}$ / $I\{Nb(C,N)\}_{(111)}$, is less than 0.4 based on X-ray diffraction of extraction residues of precipitates in the steel.

18. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 1, wherein the % by mass basis of Nb is from about 0.30% to about 0.70%.

19. (new) A soft ferrite structure, Cr-containing steel having a composition, on a % by mass basis, comprising:

C: from about 0.001% to about 0.020%;

Si: more than about 0.10% and less than about 0.50%;

Mn: less than about 2.00%;

P: less than about 0.060%;

S: less than about 0.008%;

Cr: from about 12.0% or more to about 16.0%;

Ni: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%;

N: less than about 0.020%;

Nb: from about 0.30% to less than 1.00%;

Mo: more than about 0.80% and less than about 3.00%; and

Fe and incidental impurities,

wherein the contents of alloying elements, silicon and molybdenum, represented by Si and Mo, respectively, on a % by mass basis, satisfy the following formula (1):

$$Si \leq 1.2 - 0.4Mo \qquad (1)$$

wherein the steel has a ferrite single phase structure.

20. (new) The ferrite structure, soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, wherein the % by mass basis of Nb is from about 0.30% to about 0.70%.

21. (new) An automobile exhaust system component, comprising a member made of a soft Cr-containing steel having a composition, on a % by mass basis, comprising:

C: from about 0.001% to about 0.020%;

Si: more than about 0.10% and less than about 0.50%;

Mn: less than about 2.00%;

P: less than about 0.060%;

S: less than about 0.008%;

Cr: from about 12.0% or more to about 16.0%;

Ni: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%;

N: less than about 0.020%;

Nb: from about 0.30% to less than 1.00%;

Mo: more than about 0.80% and less than about 3.00%; and

Fe and incidental impurities,

wherein the contents of alloying elements, silicon and molybdenum, represented by Si and Mo, respectively, on a % by mass basis, satisfy the following formula (1):

$$Si \leq 1.2 - 0.4Mo. \qquad (1)$$

22. (new) The automobile exhaust system component of Claim 21, wherein the component is an outer casing for a catalytic converter.

23. (new) The automobile exhaust system component of Claim 21, wherein the component is an exhaust pipe.

24. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, wherein the content of Mo is more than about 1.50% and less than about 3.00% by mass in the composition.

25. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

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26. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 24, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

27. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

28. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 24, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

29. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 25, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

30. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

31. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 24, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

32. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 25, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

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33. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 26, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

34. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

35. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 24, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

36. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 25, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

37. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 26, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

38. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 27, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

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39. (new) The soft Cr-containing steel according to Claim 19, wherein regarding the state of Mo in the steel, a ratio of (112) diffraction intensity of the Laves phase, $(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)$, to (111) diffraction intensity of Nb carbonitride, Nb(C,N), A value = $I\{(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)\}_{(112)}$ / $I\{Nb(C,N)\}_{(111)}$, is less than 0.4 based on X-ray diffraction of extraction residues of precipitates in the steel.

40. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, wherein the content of Mo is more than about 1.50% and less than about 3.00% by mass in the composition.

41. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

42. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 40, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one selected from the group consisting of Cu: from about 0.05% to about 1.00%, Ti: from about 0.02% to about 0.50%, V: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%, and B: from about 0.0005% to about 0.0100%.

43. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

44. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 40, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

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45. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 41, further comprising W: from about 0.50% to about 5.00% by mass.

46. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

47. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 40, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

48. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 41, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

49. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 42, further comprising Al: from about 0.02% to about 0.50% by mass.

50. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

51. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 40, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

52. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 41, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

53. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 42, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element

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selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

54. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 43, further comprising, on a % by mass basis, at least one element selected from the group consisting of REM: from about 0.03% to about 0.10% and Zr: from about 0.05% to about 0.50%.

55. (new) The exhaust system according to Claim 21, wherein regarding the state of Mo in the steel, a ratio of (112) diffraction intensity of the Laves phase, $(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)$, to (111) diffraction intensity of Nb carbonitride, Nb(C,N), A value = $I\{(Fe,Cr)_2(Mo,Nb)\}_{(112)}$ / $I\{Nb(C,N)\}_{(111)}$, is less than 0.4 based on X-ray diffraction of extraction residues of precipitates in the steel.

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